

REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment is made to more particularly claim the present invention and in response to an Advisory Action dated November 1, 2004. Claims 1-23 are pending. Applicants have amended claims 1, 16, 9, 21, and 23. New claim 24 has been added. Support for the amendments to the claims and for new claim 24 is found throughout the specification, and in particular, on page 7, line 17, to page 8, line 18. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been presented. Accordingly, claims 1-24 are pending in the present application.

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the after-final phone interview of October 12, 2004. We appreciate the courtesy and helpfulness of the Examiner in the interview. The claims have been amended in light of the points made by the Examiner in the interview. In particular, the Examiner's suggestion to incorporate limitations from page 8, lines 11-12 is reflected in amended independent claim 9, which recites a "probability value reflecting the percentage of rows of said one or more columns for which said constraint predicate is true."

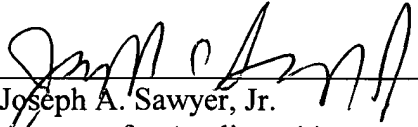
Amended independent claims 1, 16, 21, and 23 have been amended to further define the scope and novelty of the "statistical soft constraint" the present invention, "wherein said statistical soft constraint is not necessarily valid for all of said data." New Claim 24 recites that the "statistical soft constraint comprises said statistical information as an extra piece of

information along with an expression expected in an ordinary integrity constraint.” Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references do not teach these features.

Respectfully submitted,

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